GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:168
ANSWERED ON:25.07.2005
PROTECTION OF WILDLIFE AND ENVIRONMENT
Kurup Adv. Suresh

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government received any letter signed by 40 wildlife and environmental organizations regarding the Government policies in protection of wildlife and environment;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA)

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The major issues highlighted in the letter dated 4.10.2004 are at Annexure.

(c) Forest land and wildlife habitat are protected by various laws including the Indian Forest Act, 1927, the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, and the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. All cases of diversion and use of forest as well as wildlife habitats for non-forestry purposes are examined by expert committees strictly under the provisions of these laws and the orders of Hon'ble Supreme Court issued from time to time. Rehabilitation measures including compensatory afforestation, restoration of habitats is a mandatory provision while granting clearances for developmental projects after due consideration of its necessity without compromising conservation concerns.

ANNEXURE

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (b) OF THE LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 168 REGARDING PROTECTION OF WILDLIFE AND ENVIRONMENT RAISED BY SHRI SURESH KURUP DUE FOR REPLY ON 25.7.2005.

The major issues highlighted by the activitists, NGO's and others in their letter dated 4th October, 2004 are as given below:

1. Wildlife habitats and populations continue to be under serious threat from 'development' projects across India.

2. Several kinds of development projects have been granted clearance despite extremely poor environmental impact assessment, including blatantly plagiarized studies.

3. Several destructive development projects have been allowed inside or immediately bordering Protected areas.

4. Several clearances have been granted completely ignoring the citizens, inputs.

5. The National Board for Wildlife and Expert Committees for environmental clearance have been weakened.

6. Compensatory mechanism for clearance of projects cannot be substitute for sound decision making based on comprehensive environmental and social impact assessment.

7. Repeated dilutions of notifications under the Environmental Protection Act have made wildlife habitats and sensitive ecosystems more vulnerable to development pressures.